

Message Text

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HEREWITH FULL TEXT WILLIAM SAFIRE ESSAY ENTITLED "THE
DETENE-FIRSTERS" ON OP/ED PAGE NYTIMES, MONDAY, DEC. 17:

FOR ABOUT 5,000 YEARS, JEWS HAVE BEEN CONFRONTING
EACH OTHER AND THE REST OF MANKIND WITH IRRITATING MORAL
QUESTIONS. IN THAT TRADITION, THE TWO MORAL DILEMMAS OF
TODAY'S INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS CENTER ON JEWS:

1. SHOULD THE UNITED STATES CONDITION ITS TRADE POLICY
WITH THE SOVIET UNION ON A RELAXATION OF EMIGRATION RE-
STRICTIONS NOW APPLIED TO SOVIET JEWS--OR SHOULD WE PLACE
DETENTE AHEAD OF A CAMPAIGN TO PRESSURE A TOTALITARIAN
SYSTEM INTO GRANTING SOME OF ITS PEOPLE WHAT WE CONSIDER
TO BE THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS?

2. SHOULD NATIONS FOLLOW THEIR OBVIOUS ECONOMIC IN-
TERESTS BY SUPPORTING THE ARAB STATES' WAR AGAINST ISRAEL,
AND THEREBY AVERT SACRIFICE AND DISCOMFORT BY PEOPLE WHO
ARE NOT "INVOLVED"--OR SHOULD THEY INDULGE THEIR GUILTY
CONSCIENCES AND SUPPORT COMMITMENTS MADE TWO MIDEAST WARS

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AGO?

BECAUSE THESE MORAL QUESTIONS ARE ON THE WORLD'S FRONT BURNERS TODAY, WE CAN ASK AN EVEN MORE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION: WHAT PART SHOULD MORALITY PLAY IN THE FOREIGN

AFFAIRS OF A NATION LIKE OURS?

HENRY KISSINGER, AFTER MAKING ALL DUE OBEISANCES TO MORALITY, MOTHERHOOD AND THE SPIRIT OF LAWS, WOULD SAY THAT IT IS NOT THE BUSINESS OF THE UNITED STATES TO SEEK TO INFLUENCE THE WAY OTHER NATIONS LIVE--THAT THE ACTION OF MORALISTS LIKE SENATOR HENRY JACKSON HARMS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A "WORLD ORDER" WITHOUT WAR.

THE KISSINGER POSITION, WHILE ESSENTIALLY AMORAL, IS DEFENSIBLE. HE WOULD POINT OUT THAT WARS ARE ALWAYS STARTED IN THE NAME OF MORALITY; CRUSADES WERE UNDERTAKEN THAT SAVAGED INFIDELS IN THE NAME OF GOD; WORLD WARS WERE BEGUN IN THE NAME OF A RIGHTEOUS "PLACE IN THE SUN," AND THROUGHOUT HISTORY, MORALIZERS FROM PATRICK HENRY TO JOHN FOSTER DULLES PLACED THEMSELVES SQUARELY AGAINST THE NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN DIFFERENT SYSTEMS.

TO THE PEACE-SEEKING AMORALISTS NOW SHAPING OUR FOREIGN POLICY, THE MORALISTS ARE THE MISCHIEF-MAKERS, THE OBSTACLES TO CHANGE AND THE UNWITTING DISTURBERS OF THE PEACE. WHY, ASKS OUR SECRETARY OF STATE, SHOULD WE IMPOSE OUR STANDARDS OF FREEDOM ON OTHERS--WHY SHOULD NOT EVERY NATION AND EVERY IDEOLOGY SEEK ITS OWN DESTINY, IN PEACE WITH ITS NEIGHBORS? HAVEN'T THE MORALISTS BEEN ABLE ONLY TO ACHIEVE A BLOODY WAR IN EVERY GENERATION?

THE DETENTE-FIRSTERS HAVE A POTENT ARGUMENT, EVEN IF--IN DEFERENCE TO OLD VALUE SYSTEMS--THEY DO NOT MAKE IT IN SUCH STARK, AMORAL TERMS.

IN TRUTH, HOWEVER, THEY ASK THE MORALISTS TO SET ASIDE THE TROUBLESOME QUESTIONS OF RIGHT AND WRONG, OR FREEDOM AND SLAVERY--AND INSTEAD CONSIDER THE NECESSITY OF SURVIVAL IN A NUCLEAR AGE, AND THINK ABOUT THE FREEDOM TO LIVE IN AN "ORDER" THAT AT LEAST DOES AWAY WITH WORLD WAR.

THE FIRST TROUBLE WITH "DETENTE FIRST" IS THAT THIS NEW AMORALITY IS INCONSISTENT WITH THE NIXON DOCTRINE. WE PROCEEDED IN SOUTHEAST ASIA ON THE NOTION THAT "OUR WORD" WAS GOOD AND THAT A GREAT POWER WOULD LOSE ITS STABILIZING INFLUENCE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD IF IT WERE TO UNCLASSIFIED

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RENEGE ON A COMMITMENT ANYWHERE. WE DID NOT EXPEND ALL THAT BLOOD AND TREASURE IN VIETNAM, TURNING BACK A MILITARY CHALLENGE TO "OUR WORD," TO SUCCUMB TO A DIPLOMATIC TEMPTATION IN THE MIDEAST TO SELL OUT AN ALLY.

THE NEED FOR CONSISTENCY IN POLICY DOES NOT IMPRESS THE AMORALISTS. WHEN A CHALLENGE WAS MADE TO HENRY KISSINGER AT A WHITE HOUSE MEETING TWO YEARS AGO THAT SOME MOVE WAS "NOT CONSISTENT WITH THE NIXON DOCTRINE," MR.

KISSINGER'S HEATED REPLY WAS, "WE WROTE THE GODDAM

TO SWAP DOCTRINES IN MIDSTREAM.

THE GREATER DIFFICULTY WITH "DETENTE FIRST" AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR THE NIXON DOCTRINE IS THIS: EVEN SUCH A NOBLE END AS A STABLE WORLD ORDER DOES NOT JUSTIFY ANY MEANS FOR ATTAINING IT. OUR FOREIGN POLICY MUST HAVE A MORAL BASIS, UPSETTING THOUGH THAT MAY BE.

WE CANNOT CLOSE OUR EYES TO COMMUNIST INJUSTICE IN THE SOVIET UNION OR TO FASCIST INJUSTICE IN GREECE. THAT DOES NOT MEAN WE RETURN TO THOSE HALCYON DAYS OF GUNBOAT DIPLOMACY, OR DEMAND THAT EVERYBODY ADOPT OUR SYSTEM OR ELSE, BUT IT DOES MEAN WE USE OUR CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE--AND OUR ECONOMIC MUSCLE--WHEREVER WE CAN TO ENCOURAGE HUMAN FREEDOM.

A REALISTIC REALPOLITIK WOULD RECOGNIZE MORALITY AS A FORCE IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS; NO GENUINE PRAGMATIST CAN OVERLOOK THE DEBILITATING EFFECT ON THE NATIONAL CHARACTER OF THE AMORALISTS' POLICY OF DETENTE-FIRST.

THE IRONY IS THAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, IN THE LAST ELECTION, CHOSE A LEADER WHOSE PAST PERFORMANCE AND EVERY CURRENT INSTINCT IS IN THE DIRECTION OF A BASICALLY MORALIST FOREIGN POLICY, WITH A PRACTICAL OVERLAY.

BUT THE PRESIDENT HAS TURNED HIS FOREIGN POLICY FORMULATION OVER TO THE NUMBER ONE DETENTE-FIRSTER, WHO--IN BOTH THE TRADE-EMIGRATION ISSUE AND THE MIDEAST SITUATION--HAS SHOWN HIS EVERY INSTINCT TO BE IN THE DIRECTION OF A BASICALLY AMORALIST POLICY, WITH AN ENDEARING OVERLAY OF THE RHETORIC OF MORAL ANGUISH. (END TEXT). RUSH

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